



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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17 January 2003

### RUS40190.E

Russia: Update of RUS33941.E of 10 March 2000 on the treatment of Tatars  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Tatars are described as the largest ethnic minority group in Russia (CIDCM Aug. 2002). Its 5,522,100 individuals can be subdivided into Volga-Ural (Kazan, Kasimov and Mishars), Siberian (Tobol, Tara, Tyumen et al.) and Astrakhan (Yurtovsk and Kundrovsk) ethno-territorial groups (NUPI n.d.). The 2002 update of the Minorities at Risk project describes the Tatar as territorially concentrated in the titular republic of Tatarstan, although large numbers live outside of it (CIDCM Aug. 2002).

The Research Directorate found no reports detailing the maltreatment of ethnic Tatars in Russia among the sources consulted. In 2002, Amnesty International noted that members of visible minorities in Russia "appeared to be disproportionately subject" to identity checks, which often led accordingly to requests for bribes, extortion and imposition of arbitrary sanctions (2002). A second report identified Tatar grievances as generally linked to their desire for autonomy and their perception of being socially and economically disadvantaged vis-à-vis Russians (CIDCM Aug. 2002). This claim is represented by, for example, the Kazan, nationalist All-Tatar Public Centre's characterizations of Russian policy as being "colonial, illegal and aimed at the 'ultimate liquidation'" of the Tatar nation and its peoples (Strana.ru 15 Apr. 2002). In addition, members of Tatarstan's legislature protested the Russian State Duma's plan to divide Tatars into six ethnic groups for the 2002 census (RFE/RL 10 Dec. 2001). A Tatar ethnologist described this plan as "subversive" and claimed that it was seeking to weaken the ethnic group (RFE/RL 17 Dec. 2001).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Amnesty International. 2002. "Ethnic Minorities Under Attack." In *Justice for Everybody: Human Rights in the Russian Federation*. <<http://www.amnesty.org/russia/minorities.html>> [Accessed 15 Jan. 2003]

Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM). August 2002. Amy Pate, Darya Puskina and Mizan Rahman Khan. "Tatars in Russia." (Minorities at Risk). <<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/data/rustatar.htm>> [Accessed 14 Jan. 2003]

Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI). n.d. Centre for Russian Studies. "Ethnic Groups: Tatars." <[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Tatarian](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk_b.exe?Tatarian)> [Accessed 14 Jan. 2003]

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). 17 December 2001. *Tatr-Bashkir Daily Report*. "Scholar Says Tatars May 'Lose' Majority Status After Census." <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tatar-l/message/3295>> [Accessed 15 Jan. 2003]

\_\_\_\_\_. 10 December 2001. *Newsline* Vol. 5, No. 232, Part I. "Tatar Officials Protest Census Plan." (Tatar-L Listserv) <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tatar-l/message/3274>> [Accessed 15 Jan. 2003]

Strana.ru [Moscow, in Russian]. 15 April 2002. "Tatar Congress Slates Russia's 'Colonial' Policy, Seeks Volga-Urals Union." (BBC Worldwide Monitoring 17 Apr. 2002/WNC)

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:**

ACCORD 8<sup>th</sup> *European Country of Origin Information Seminar* Vienna, 28 - 29 June 2002

Andrei Sakharov Foundation

Centre for European Migration and Ethnic Studies

Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Tatarstan

Council of Europe

Ethnobarometer

European Research Center on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER)

Freedom House

*Human Rights in Russian Regions 2000* (Moscow Helsinki)

Human Rights Watch

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

European Commission for Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) *Second Report on the Russian Federation* (16 March 2001)

MINELRES

ReliefWeb

Russian Human Rights Institute

Russian Regional Report

Tatar-L Listserve

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization

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